I. Administrative

A. Presentation sign-up sheet

B. General Questions?

II. Questions about the Readings?

III. Frege: “On Sense and Reference”

A. Take-home Messages

1. Reference alone will not work to account for linguistic meaningfulness

2. We need to introduce a second layer of meaning in our account, and distinguish sense from reference, where sense determines reference

3. Senses are not conceptions (i.e., ideas) – they are abstract objects to which all speakers have access

4. Since all meaningful linguistic items (e.g., words, expressions, sentences) must have (at least) sense, it is important to evaluate many different types of linguistic expressions to determine what the rules are associated with sense and reference assignments

5. Substitution is a legitimate theoretical methodology in this domain

B. Details

1. All meaningful items must have (at least) sense, and the assignment of sense and reference (when it exists) must be based on the principle of compositionality; further, we can test predictions of any particular theory
against our intuitions as speakers of the language (see 4 below)

2. Sense and reference of more complex items are compositionally determined from the senses and references of their constituent parts, according to grammatical rules

3. This inclines Frege to spend a lot of time looking at other expressions, e.g., subordinate clauses, such as noun, adjectival, and adverbial clauses

4. There are important epistemological assumptions built into the system: transparency, Platonism about senses

C. Challenges

1. Can the Platonist epistemology be defended?

2. Embedded contexts do not seem to

3. Frege’s view implies truth-value gaps

4. Does it make sense to say that the referent of a sentence is its truth value?

III. Russell: “Descriptions”

A. Take-home Messages

1. The surface structure of a sentence need not be an adequate guide to the logical structure of that sentence

2. Not everything that might look like a referring term is in fact a referring term

3. Reference must be distinguished from denotation

4. Indefinite and definite description must be given different analyses

5. Definite noun phrases are to be analyzed as complex quantifiers

B. Details

1. Russell is guided by a robust “feeling for reality” that guides his intuitions about language and meaning

2. Definite descriptions are analyzed in part under the influence of a recognition that they can be used significantly even if there is no referent
3. Russell departs from Frege in his treatment of empty noun phrases

C. Challenges

1. Should we really think of names as disguised descriptions?

2. Can you get by with universal quantification in the way that Russell seems to recommend?

IV. Arguments

A. Opening paragraph of Frege

B. Frege, pp. 22-23: the referent of a sentence is its truth value